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### Transplanting Evergreens

At this time of the year or perhaps a little later many of you will be moving evergreen shrubs and trees from one location to another, or you may be getting new plants from some nursery and planting them around your homes. Now an evergreen happens to be any plant that retains its leaves in a green state throughout the year. You may be dealing with a pine or cone-bearing evergreen, or a broad-leaved evergreen such as a holly, a rhododendron, a magnolia, or any one of a dozen other evergreen plants but the method of handling is much the same for all of them.

When you transplant or move a deciduous plant, that is one which sheds its leaves every fall and puts on new leaves in the spring, you generally do the work in the winter or early spring while the plant is dormant and there is very little need for its roots to furnish the top with a large amount of moisture. But no matter when you transplant an evergreen, the roots must go right on supplying the top with plenty of moisture. That's the reason that evergreens are generally moved with a ball of earth about their roots.

Evergreens are moved to the best advantage in the spring of the year about the time they start active growth, but they may be safely moved at any time during the growing season, provided, of course, you do the work properly.

Let us suppose that you have an evergreen, say an arborvitae, growing along the foundation of your house and it is getting a little too large for its present location and you want to move it. First, dig a hole in the new location, and, perhaps if the soil is poor you line the hole with about 3 or 4 inches of good soil. Next you bind the lower branches of the arborvitae together with soft string, then you begin to dig around the plant. If this is the first time you ever tried to move an evergreen you will probably begin to dig directly toward the plant just as you would if you were taking up an apple tree or a maple tree in the nursery but that is not the proper way. Here is the way to dig an evergreen. Reverse the shovel or the spade in your hands and dig with the back of the tool toward the roots of the plant. You start considerable distance from the plant and work the soil away from it so that you leave a solid ball of earth about its roots. As you gradually go deeper you will work in underneath the plant, sort of undermine it on all sides. All the time you keep the back or round part of the spade or shovel toward the roots.

When you get the plant undermined you wrap the ball of earth with burlap. One way is to cut the burlap in long strips about six inches wide and use these strips as bandages around the ball of earth. Another way is to take a burlap bag or gunny sack, open it at the seams so as to have a large piece of material then bind this around the ball of earth and fasten it with twine. If the ball of earth is good and solid you may not need to bind anything around it but simply carry the plant carefully to its new location.

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Be sure that you have the new hole deep enough. Then when the plant is in place you can carefully unwrap the burlap from around the ball of earth and fill the hole with good soil. If the ground is the least dry by all means add plenty of water as the hole is being filled, then firm the dirt well about the plant. It is also a good plan to shade the plant and protect it from the wind for a few days until the roots again begin to absorb plenty of moisture from the soil. A layer of mulch over the soil around the plant will also help to hold the moisture.

If the weather is dry ~~following~~ the removal or planting of evergreen plants of any kind you will need to water them about once a week. The best method is to form a ring of soil around the plant then pour water into the inclosed space and let it soak down to the roots of the plant.

Should you be planting rhododendrons, azaleas, laurel, or any of the so-called heather plants, better make sure that your soil suits them. Practically all plants of this class require an acid soil. People often bring plants of rhododendron or of the common mountain laurel from where they grow wild and plant them in their gardens. The plants may fail to grow because there was not enough of a ball of earth brought along with their roots or they may fail to grow in their new location because the soil is not sufficiently acid. The best method is to bring along plenty of the natural soil in which the plants formerly grew then keep the soil acid by applying a mulch of sawdust or oak leaves and allowing it to rot around the plants.

Pines and all cone-bearing evergreens do best in a soil that is near the neutral point and so do not want an acid soil. That is the reason that a cedar tree transplanted from the fields or woods may do better on your lawn or near your house than in its original place. In addition the soil around your house may be richer than the soil in the woods. You give the plants around your house more care than they get where they grow wild. Nursery-grown plants are given every care and for that reason are better for transplanting than those that grow wild, but, in spite of this you can often pick up a good cedar or hemlock that is growing wild and transplant it to your own dooryard.

The main point is to dig the plant carefully and move it with a good ball of earth around its roots. Shrubs that shed their leaves can be moved without a ball of earth but even they do better if considerable soil is kept about their roots. Bulletin available, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1591 on Transplanting Trees and Shrubs